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FROM: ROME

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 932, OCTOBER 25, 6 PM

EMBTel 919

REACTIONS TO CUBAN SITUATION BY GOVERNMENT COALITION PARTIES SEEM TO BE INFLUENCED MAINLY BY POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF CUBAN CRISIS ON POSITIONS WHICH PARTIES TAKE ON STABILITY OF CENTER-LEFT GOVERNMENT AND ON ELECTORAL POSTURE OF RESPECTIVE PARTIES. FANFANI, MORO AND SARAGAT HAVE BEEN IN FREQUENT CONSULTATION WITH NENNI, AND PUBLIC POSITIONS OF ALL CONCERNED HAVE APPARENTLY BEEN CLOSELY COORDINATED. COMMUNISTS APPEAR UNDECIDED (ABSENCE DEMONSTRATIONS SO FAR IN ROME AND SMALLNESS THOSE IN OTHER CITIES-- MILAN, TURIN, GENOA-- CONTRAST STRANGELY WITH BOLD ANTI-US HEADLINES, VIRULENT EDITORIALS) PERHAPS FEARING POLITICAL ISOLATION.

REASON FOR PCI CAUTION MAY BE THAT PARTY HAS NOT RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS FROM MOSCOW (AS PSI SOURCE SAYS), BUT IT MAY ALSO BE DUE TO NEED FOR THOROUGH ORGANIZATIONAL PREPARATIONS. WE HAVE REPORTS PCI PLANS LARGE MEETING TONIGHT FOLLOWED BY MARCH TO EMBASSY; AND THAT PCI SLOWLY MOVING TO BRING CGIL INTO POSITION OF ACTIVE SUPPORT FOR SOVIET POLICY. INTERESTING HOWEVER THAT PCI CHOSE TO LET SANTI, VICE SEC CGIL, CALL CGIL POLITICAL DEMONSTRATION ROME FRIDAY AND IN FLORENCE, FOR INSTANCE, CONSUL GENERAL REPORTS PCI IS LETTING FRONT GROUPS MOUNT MAIN PROPAGANDA ACTIVITIES.

AS FOR GOI POSITION, MANY POINT TO FACT PRIMIN EXPRESSED FULL SUPPORT ONLY FOR PROCEDURAL ASPECT OF US TAKING CUBA SITUATION TO UN (EMBTel 928). BUT MALOGODI, LIBERAL PARTY SEC, USUALLY HIGHLY CRITICAL OF GOVERNMENT POLICY, CALLED ON ME YESTERDAY AND SAID HE "UNDERSTOOD" PRESSURES

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PRIMIN UNDERGOING AND HAD BEEN PERSONALLY REASSURED BY PRIMIN GOI WILL FOLLOW "RIGHT LINE". ALSO SAID FONOFF UNDERSEC RUSSO (NOW AT UN) INFORMED HIM OF PRIMIN ASSURANCE THAT GOI WILL STAND FIRMLY WITH US IN UN.

WE HAVE IMPRESSION SEGNI AND OTHER DC CONSERVATIVES BEGINNING MOVE INTO PICTURE SLOWLY TO PUT WEIGHT BEHIND FULLER SUPPORT OF US. (SEGNI HAS SEEN FANFANI TWICE IN TWO DAYS.)

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MORO REPORTEDLY NOT WORRIED ABOUT POSSIBLE EFFECTS US ACTION ON DC RELATIONS WITH PSI, AND TRYING PERSUADE SARAGAT OF CORRECTNESS OF US ACTION.

SARAGAT EDITORIAL IN PSDI ORGAN YESTERDAY TOOK DISAPPOINTINGLY LEGALISTIC ATTITUDE, PONDERING WHETHER US ACTIONS NECESSARY OR RIGHT. BUT AGAIN WE ARE ASSURED BY RELIABLE SOCIALIST CONTACT THAT SARAGAT CHECKED FIRST WITH NENNI AND WROTE AS HE DID MAINLY BECAUSE HE DID NOT WANT TO ISOLATE HIMSELF FROM PSI OR FROM WORKERS MOVEMENT, RATHER THAN BECAUSE OF ANY BASIC CHANGE IN USUAL SUPPORT FOR US FOREIGN POLICY. (FURTHER CLUE TO SARAGAT'S ATTITUDE MAY LIE IN REPORT THAT SARAGAT HOPES SUCCEED NENNI AS SEC OF SOCIALIST PARTY.)

IN LABOR SITUATION CGIL SEEMS DELIBERATELY MOVING TOWARDS PRODUCING INCREASED DISTURBANCES BY PROVOKING BREAK DOWNS IN CURRENT LABOR-MANAGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS (AS IN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY) IN ORDER TO CALL STRIKES, WHICH IT EVIDENTLY INTENDS TRY TURN TO POLITICAL ENDS. CISL ENDEAVORING BLOCK THIS BUT GOING ALONG WITH LONG PLANNED ECONOMIC STRIKES SUCH AS 24-HOUR PORT WORKERS STRIKE NOW APPARENTLY SCHEDULED FOR TOMORROW. CISL FOLLOWING FANFANI LINE ON CUBAN CRISIS,

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RELUCTANT TO REFER SPECIFICALLY TO MERITS OF QUARANTINE LEST IT EXPOSE ITSELF TO EMBARRASSING QUESTIONS FROM PCI AND PSI ON US MISSILE BASES IN ITALY. UIL ATTITUDE CAUTIOUS; IT INTENDS PUBLISH PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S SPEECH IN ITS WEEKLY WITH FEW LINES OF SUPPORTING COMMENT, NOTHING MORE.

ON MILITARY SIDE AIR AND ARMY ATTACHES REPORT ITALIAN ARMY AND AIR FORCE TAKING SOME PRECAUTIONARY STEPS ESPECIALLY IN INTELLIGENCE AND ANTI-AIRCRAFT DEPARTMENTS.

FOR MEDIA AND OTHER COMMENTS ON SITUATION AS OF 24TH SEE EMBTEL 925.

COMMENT; GENERALLY IN ITALY AT TIMES OF STRESS LIKE THIS, FORCES OPPOSED TO THOSE IN POWER MAKE PLAY FOR POLITICAL GAINS AND IN THIS CASE THOSE WITHIN DC FOR INSTANCE WHO DISLIKE CENTER-LEFT POLICY SEEM LOOKING FOR OPPORTUNITIES, E.G., IF ALREADY RELATIVELY WIDE DIVERGENCE OF PSI FROM FANFANI POSITION (EMBTEL 930) SHOULD WIDEN FURTHER. AT MOMENT WE SEE NO LIKELIHOOD OF FALL OF CENTER-LEFT GOVERNMENT AS RESULT THESE CENTRIFUGAL FORCES BUT BETTOL (RIGHT WING DC DEPUTY HEADING CHAMBER FONAFFS COMMITTEE) TOLD EMBOFF THAT AT FIRST SIGN ITALY WAVERING IN ITS SUPPORT OF US AS RESULT "PSI NEUTRALISM" HE AND OTHER CONSERVATIVE DC LEADERS (SCELBA, GONELLA, PELLA) WOULD MOVE TO TORPEDO GOVERNMENT. UNDOUBTEDLY, FANFANI'S AWARENESS OF AND DESIRE AVOID THIS (AND WE WOULD HOPE ALSO NENNI'S) ARE REFLECTED IN THEIR CAUTIOUS STATEMENTS.

MY NATO COLLEAGUES ARE GENERALLY AGREED THAT FANFANI'S SOMEWHAT EQUIVOCAL LINE IS ABOUT BEST WE COULD HOPE FOR IN LIGHT OF INTERNAL PRESSURES WORKING ON HIM.

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